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THE RATIONAL METHOD

OF

TEACHING READING.

BY

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*N. B.—The author would be pleased to receive your opinion of the Rational Method, no matter whether it is good, bad or indifferent.*

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## THE RATIONAL METHOD OF TEACHING READING.

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Reading being the means by which we acquire a large portion of our knowledge, it is of paramount importance that it should be quickly learned; and to be quickly learned it must be rightly taught. It has been taught for thousands of years; but has it been rightly taught? Within the last few years there has been a complete revolution in the teaching of mathematics. Instead of rules, principles are now taught, and results are reached which it was impossible to reach under the system previously pursued. But although many changes have been made in the teaching of reading, it is well known that there has not been any marked improvement in the results. The following extracts are proofs of this. "Insufficient and unsatisfactory results are probably approximated more nearly in reading than in any other study."—*J. B. M'Chesney*. "The problem of teaching beginners to read is the most difficult one the teacher has to encounter."—*Canada School Journal*, Nov., 1882. "The problem of teaching children to read has, in my belief, never yet been fully faced or thoroughly solved. \* \* \* In England \* \* \* we meet with the

problem in a form of extremest difficulty; and the want of a solution that shall bring confidence with it into all our Primary Schools makes itself still everywhere felt."—*Meiklejohn*. And thousands of toiling teachers, who have not put their opinions in print, are forced to the same conclusion every time they teach a class of beginners. 'And why is this? Why is not the teaching of reading as satisfactory as the teaching of arithmetic? Our irregular orthography is partly responsible for it, but we believe the chief reason is that we are teaching most of our arithmetic on sound principles of education, but in the teaching of reading many of those principles are constantly violated. As assertions without proof are little regarded in these days, we will proceed to substantiate this statement. First, we will enunciate those leading principles which might well be called the axioms of education.

### *I. ANALYSIS BEFORE SYNTHESIS.*

The quickest way to learn the mechanism of a clock or any other machine is to take it apart and then put the parts together again. As in teaching grammar we first take sentences and separate them into their parts, and afterwards take words and make up sentences, so in teaching reading we should first separate words into their parts and afterwards combine the parts to make words.

### *II. PROCEED FROM THE KNOWN TO THE UNKNOWN.*

Knowledge, to be practical, must form a chain. Each succeeding link must be connected with the preceding one, and then thoroughly welded. Giving

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disconnected facts is not educating. Therefore the first lesson in reading should begin with something with which the child is familiar, and each after lesson be connected with the one before it.

### *III. DO NOT TRY TO TEACH TOO MUCH AT ONCE.*

When we eat just as much as nature requires, our bodies are strengthened; but if we eat three times as much, sickness certainly will, and death may, follow. And yet many pupils are compelled to take, not merely three times, but often ten times as much intellectual food as they can digest. Is it any wonder that mental dyspepsia or even mental death is the result? Has not every observant teacher seen pupils, especially in the primary reading classes, who had ceased to make any intellectual effort? And what brought their minds into this state of inertia? Doubtless one principal cause was, having to swallow more knowledge than they could assimilate.

### *IV. BEGIN WITH THE EASIEST AND GO ON GRADUALLY TO THE HARDEST.*

In teaching algebra we do not introduce quadratic equations or the binomial theorem in our first lessons. Yet many of our first readers present some of the greatest difficulties of the language in the first lessons, instead of the easiest words.

### *V. TEACH THE PUPIL HOW TO APPLY HIS KNOWLEDGE AT ONCE.*

If we place a microscope in the hands of a child who does not know what to do with it, he will soon throw it aside, or break it; but if we show him how to examine minute objects with it, he will prize and

use it. So if we communicate facts to our pupils without teaching their application, we make no permanent impression on their minds, but if we teach them how to use their knowledge, their memories will retain it.

Now let us apply these tests to the different methods of teaching reading that are in use. The first of these is the

**ALPHABETIC METHOD.**

Millions of pupils have been taught by it. It seems to be the first method that suggests itself to the mind. This is why it was first in the field, and why those who have not studied education as a science adopt it without question. The method consists in teaching all the letters of the alphabet first, and then getting the pupils to combine them in syllables and words.

1. This violates the first principle. It is putting the parts (letters) together to form wholes (words), whereas it ought first to separate the wholes into their component parts.

2. It violates the second principle. The letters of the alphabet are among the things that are farthest from the child's stock of knowledge. It would be easier for him to learn some of the first lessons in algebra, for in it the letters are supposed to represent something, but in the alphabet, taught thus before reading, they represent nothing to him. They are simply a collection of barbarous characters, having no connection with any of his previous ideas. There is a "missing link" in the chain of knowledge, which cannot be supplied until reading is fairly begun.

3. As it is commonly taught, it violates the third

principle. The prevailing plan is to point to each letter of the alphabet and have the child name it. The Rev. Henry Steinhauer, an Indian missionary to the Indians of Whitefish Lake, tells us that for six months he pointed with a stick to the letters on a card, and by the time he knew them he had worn holes through the card where the letters had been. Such was the hyper-barbaric process by which he was introduced to civilization. And doubtless many of those who have had a few years experience in teaching by this method could tell us of some who have been twice six months learning the letters. I have heard of a teacher who gave a child a penny for every letter he learned. This was done for the same reason that pills are sugar-coated.

4. As it is usually taught, it violates the fourth principle. Most of those who teach by this method teach the letters in the conventional order, a, b, c, d, e, f, g, &c. Now b and d are the two hardest letters to learn; and x, w, s, t, y, r, z, u, and v are all easier than p or q.

From observation and experiment the author has concluded that the following are the easiest orders:

o, x, s, i, w, t, g, n, a, f, y, c, r, h, z, k, u, m, v, l, j, e, q, p, d, b, for the small letters; and

O, X, S, I, W, Z, V, C, J, K, Y, P, T, U, N, R, A, B, D, H, M, L, G, Q, F, E, for the capitals.

These arrangements are not absolutely perfect, because all children do not experience the same amount of difficulty with the same letters. Some may learn c more quickly than n, and others may learn n more quickly than c, but while the middle letters might vary in their arrangement with different pupils, it is

firmly believed that those at the beginning are the easiest and those at the end the hardest to learn.

5. As commonly taught, it violates the first principle. I have before me a small book entitled "Learning to Read." "Lesson I." contains the whole alphabet in *capital*s. "Lesson II." contains the whole alphabet in small letters, together with the following *attractive* combinations:—fi, ff, fl, ffi, ffl, æ, œ. In all this there is no application of knowledge. After this *delightful* exercise the pupil is ready for "Lesson III.," which consists of the following *edifying* syllables:—

|    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| ab | ba | da | fa | na | ma |
| eb | be | de | fe | ne | me |
| ib | bi | di | fi | ni | mi |
| ob | bo | do | fo | no | mo |
| ub | bu | du | fu | nu | mu |

I may mention that between "Lesson II." and "Lesson III." there is a picture of a snail crawling along with a shell on its back. This is an appropriate symbol of the pupil at this stage, although I think any one who has given much attention to the subject will declare that the snail makes considerably more progress, and carries a far lighter burden. The fourth and fifth lessons consist of such *instructive* sentences as "As I am," "Is it I," "do I so," "Am I to go," "If it is we," "it is of me," &c. However, the sixth lesson is more sensible. The seventh is about a pig, but the picture above it is that of a goat. Several of the other illustrations are equally inappropriate. According to the title-page, 269,000 of these books had been printed, and as this was an old one, it is probable that 300,000, or perhaps even 400,000 have

been printed by this time. Who can bear to reflect on the tortures endured by thousands of little innocents while "Learning to Read" in these outrageous primers? And yet these "Reading Books for Infants" were published by "Educational Publishers," who tell us that "These Books have been prepared with great care by practical Teachers. The Lessons are interesting and instructive \* \* \*; they are \* \* \* suitably Illustrated." They "received the recommendation of the London (Eng.) School Board" and had the "Testimony of a School Inspector" that "The Lessons have been carefully drawn up and well arranged."

Having pointed out the defects of the Alphabetic Method, it is but fair to mention its merits also. They are,

1. The teaching of spelling. No one can recognize a word wherever he sees it unless he knows the letters which compose the word, and the order in which they are arranged. For example, how could we distinguish the word "big" from the word "dig" if we did not know the difference between b and d, or "man" from "men" if we could not tell a from e? The recognition of a word is simply the recognition of letters in a certain order, and as learning spelling means learning that order, it is absolutely necessary to reading.

2. It teaches the names of the letters. That this is an advantage is proved by the preceding statements. Teachers should not take it for granted that beginners can easily discern the composition of a word. They should apply some test; and the readiest one is, asking them to name the letters in order. Besides,

children want to know the name of everything they see. In "Primer I." of Prof. Meiklejohn's series of readers "It is earnestly recommended that the *names* of the letters be not taught until a *need* for their names has arisen in the pupil's mind." This is excellent advice; but it must be understood that the "need" arises just as soon as they realize that a word is a compound body and that letters are its elements. Any one who has observed children so little as not to know this may easily prove it in the following manner. One day as a little girl was standing beside me I took out of my pocket a piece of India-rubber, and showed it to her without saying a word. Immediately came the question "What is this?" And when told it was India-rubber, she asked "What is it for?" I did not make this experiment because I had any doubt about the fact, but because I was going to lecture on the Rational Method before a Teachers' Association, and wished to have a particular case to refer to. As Currie says:—"The mind of childhood is remarkable for its curiosity."

These points will be more fully discussed in connection with the Rational Method.

The next method we shall consider is called the  
*PHONIC METHOD.*

This method *aims at* teaching the sounds or powers of the letters without their *names*, and then getting the pupil to combine these sounds to give the sound of the word as a whole. In the March number of *The Canada Educational Monthly* there is an article taken from *The Schoolmaster*, entitled "A Glance at Education in Germany." In it occurs the following description of this method:—"When a boy enters a

German school at six years of age he usually learns to read and to write the alphabet simultaneously. His ear, his eye, his tongue, and his little hand all find employment. He hears the schoolmaster utter the sound of a letter, he sees that letter immediately written upon the blackboard; he is then told to imitate with his tongue *the sound* uttered by his schoolmaster, and, lastly, to imitate with his hand upon a slate the same letter which he has seen written upon the blackboard. The names of letters are not mentioned for a long time."

1. This violates the first principle. (See Alphabetic Method, 1.) As Meiklejohn says, "It introduces the child to an analysis (?)—into letters—in which it can have no interest, before it has laid in a stock of words on which it can perform the analysis. Nature everywhere presents us with totals, and we should, in the beginning of teaching, imitate this procedure of nature."

2. It violates the second principle. While a few of the vowel sounds may be part of "the known" to the child, what does he know of the barbarous sounds attached to the consonants by the advocates of the Phonic Method? Their strangeness and indistinctness are utterly repugnant to his feelings, and school becomes repulsive to him at once. "The child has no sympathy with, because he cannot understand, what is abstract and technical."—*Currie*.

3. It violates the fifth principle. Until reading is begun, the pupil has no use for either the forms or the powers of letters.

4. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to separate consonantal from vowel sounds. A conso-

nant is "a letter which cannot be perfectly sounded without the aid of a vowel."—*Worcester*. "A consonant is a letter which *can* be perfectly sounded without the aid of a vowel" is the dogma of hardshell *phonicians*. But they do not practise their belief. I have heard several try it, and all but one affixed the sound of *u* in *but*, thus, *bū* for *b*, *tū* for *t*, &c. The one who did not do so was surprised that any one should think that it was ever done, although he had noticed that "*Currie makes that mistake!*" However, instead of *affixing* the short sound of *u* he *prefixed* it, thus, *ūb*, *ūl*, for *b*, *l*. If well-educated men are unequal to the task, who can expect little children to accomplish it?

5. The sounds of the letters in the English language are not immutable. There are letters and combinations of letters which represent several different sounds, as *o* in *go* and *got*; *ou* in *bough*, *cough*, *ought*, &c.

There are different letters and different combinations of letters representing the same sound, as *s* and *c* in *grease* and *peace*; *oi* and *oy* in *void* and *annoyed*, &c.

Two or three letters often represent only one sound; as, *au* in *naught*; *eau* in *beau*, &c.

Letters often have no sound at all; as, *u*, *g*, and *h* in *dough*; *i* and *p* in *receipt*, &c.

But there is one thing we may learn from the Phonic Method, and that is that the pupils should be made to perceive the power of each letter in a word.

The next method is the

#### PHONETIC METHOD.

It differs from the preceding method only in having an alphabet of more than forty letters, each repre-

sounded  
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senting but one sound. When the pupil has learned to read in these characters he is set to read books printed in the ordinary way.

1. This method violates the first principle. (See Phonic Method, 1.)
2. It violates the second principle. (See Phonic Method, 2.)
3. It violates the fifth principle. (See Phonic Method, 3.)
4. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to separate consonantal from vowel sounds. (See Phonic Method, 4.)
5. In the transition from the Phonetic alphabet to the ordinary one the pupil has to unlearn a great deal of what he has learned, which causes him much confusion.

However, we get one valuable idea from this method, which is, that the difficulties of our irregular spelling should be postponed until some progress has been made in reading.

The fourth method is called the

#### LOOK-AND-SAY METHOD.

This method begins by teaching all the small and capital letters, grouping them according to their formation. The pupil is then set to read easy sentences. The teacher names each word and the pupils repeat it simultaneously and individually. They are afterwards required to read the words in various orders. When they have made some progress the teacher points out the resemblances between words and teaches the individual powers of the letters. This method is also called “Reading without Spelling.”

1. This method is not fully in accord with the first

principle. It takes it for granted that the child analyzes the words mentally for himself, without any assistance from the teacher. A few precocious children who do not come to school at the usual age may accomplish this philosophical task unaided, but the vast majority of children are unable to do so. *Those who appear to do so have been taught to spell at home.* "It introduces each individual child to each individual word; and it hopes that the child will, by the steady use of his eyes, get to know the *look* of the word and to attach to and associate with, by mere arbitrary habit, the *sound* which is considered to be the usual property of that word."—*Meiklejohn.*

2. It violates the second principle. (See Alphabetic Method, 2.) Currie, in arguing against the Phonic Method, makes these truthful remarks: "The natural way for the child to learn language, or anything else, is to begin with wholes, as alone giving him ideas which his mind can apprehend, and from wholes to proceed to their parts. For a part, unless it is contemplated by him after, and in connexion with the whole to which it belongs, has no meaning for him; and, so far as it can be said to be learnt at all, can only be learnt mechanically." Yet he advocates the Look-and-Say Method, and says: "The alphabet, both of small and capital letters, should be learned as soon as the pupil comes to school."

"Consistency, thou art a jewel."

3. It does or does not violate the fourth principle, according to what letters are introduced first. Some teachers may teach the easiest letters first and some may not. (See Alphabetic Method, 4.)

4. It violates the fifth principle more than any of

the preceding methods, as it teaches two alphabets without teaching their uses. The Alphabetic, Phonic, and Phonetic Methods teach the use of the letters as soon as the child knows them all, but the Look-and-Say method leaves the child to find out their use for himself, or rather it leaves him to be taught their use by his parents or some one else.

We learn from this method:

1. That pupils should not be required to spell *from memory* until they have made some progress in reading.
2. That spelling should be learned from words before words are learned through spelling. (See First Principle.)

#### *MODIFICATIONS OF PRECEDING METHODS.*

In discussing the different methods we have taken the plans originally followed by the advocates of each method. These plans are not followed very strictly by some teachers. Some who teach by the Alphabetic Method teach only a part of the alphabet before commencing reading. Some who teach by the Look-and-Say Method do the same, and some do not teach the alphabet at all in the first stages of reading. Some who use the Phonic Method begin by analyzing words. Others combine the Phonic with the Look-and-Say Method. As far as these plans agree with those already discussed, they are liable to the same objections, but where "a new departure" has been made *in the right direction*, some of the objections will be either partly or wholly inapplicable. If, however, any good feature of a method is left out, or any new feature introduced which is contrary to standard educational principles, additional objections may be made.

We now come to the main subject of this book, the *RATIONAL METHOD*.

When the author adopted his present profession he was made to believe that the Look-and-Say Method (without the alphabet) was the acme of pedagogy. He commenced teaching by it, with a firm belief that all who taught by the Alphabetic Method were old fogies. It seemed at first to be successful, but in a few months his faith began to waver, and by the end of the year it was completely shaken, although he still continued to teach by it. During the next year he discovered the secret of its apparent success. He had one pupil who seemed to be far superior to his classmates. When they halted at a difficulty he generally surmounted it. *He was taught to spell at home.* After a while it began to dawn upon the author's mind that a union of the Alphabetic and Look-and-Say Methods would give better results; but, giving up teaching for a year in order to have more time for study, he did not develop the idea. On entering the active work of the profession again he used the Look-and-Say Method for more than a year, not because he had any faith in it, but simply for want of a better. However, so great a tax was it upon his patience that he often wished some angel of mercy would show him a method that would give satisfaction to himself and his pupils. As no angel of mercy appeared he at last concluded to look for a system himself. His thoughts were something like this: Each of the four different methods now in use has had strong advocates: their originators must have accomplished or attempted to accomplish some good end; as they have been more or less extensively used, they probably have some

good point or points in them; and as they have been so fiercely assailed, they probably have some bad point or points in them. If all their good points can be discovered and combined in one harmonious whole without incorporating their bad points also, the result will probably be a *perfect*, or, in other words, a *rational* method of teaching reading. After much thought, the author developed a system which he believes has all the advantages of other systems without their disadvantages. In order more effectually to carry out the method he invented an apparatus called a "Sectional Blackboard," for which he obtained a patent in November, 1882. It consists of two parallel grooved bars connected by three transverse stays, and having two handles, to which straps are attached for suspending it from the wall. Four sections of blackboard, two of which are 4x4 inches and the other two 4x2 inches, have cleats attached to them which slide in the grooves. There is a stop pin at each end to prevent the sections sliding out. Two hooks are screwed into the wall, just above the ordinary blackboard, seven and a half inches apart. The straps are hung on these. Words of two letters require two sections of the blackboard; words of three letters, three sections; and words of four letters, four sections. A picture illustrative of the lesson is hung upon small hooks in the straps. The system will be presented first, and arguments in its favor advanced and objections answered afterwards. It comprises fifteen lessons. When the pupil has mastered these he is able to read fluently and expressively and spell easy monosyllables.

## LESSON I.

## OX

Suspend the frame from the wall at a suitable height; hang up the picture of the ox and put in the two large sections. Direct the attention of the class to the picture and say: Have you ever seen anything like this before? Where did you see it? How many legs has this animal? How many horns? Where are its horns? What is this? (Head.) And this? (Tail.) And this? (Mouth,) &c. What does it eat? What is it? (They will probably say it is a cow.) What does a cow do? (It gives milk.) But this animal doesn't give milk; it works at ploughing, drawing a cart, &c., or is fattened up and killed for beef. Did you ever eat any beef? &c. (Then if they do not know what it is, tell them it is an ox.) Now what is it? (Make the class repeat the word simultaneously and individually.) Now I am going to put its name under the picture. What is its name? Now see me make its name on here. (Print the word so that *o* is on one section of the board and *x* on the other.) There is its name. What is it? (Make the class again repeat it simultaneously and individually *as you point to it*.) Now see what I am going to do. (Move the sections as far apart as possible, as in Fig. 2.) What have I done? I have taken the word to pieces. This piece is called *o*. All say it. And this piece is called *x*. What is this piece called? And this? Now we will put them together again. (Move them until they are as in Fig. 1.) Now what is this word? Again. Now we will take it apart again. What is this part called? And what is this

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? Where  
And this ?  
does it eat ?  
(is a cow.)

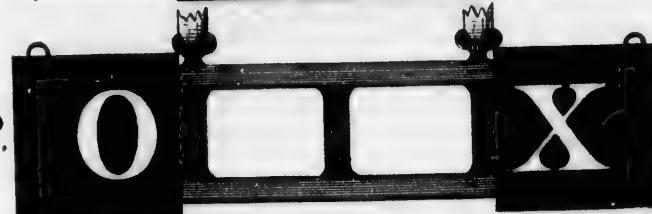
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*Fig. 1.*



*Fig. 2.*



*Fig. 3.*



*Fig. 4.*





letter called? (Move them together again.) And what is this word called? (Separate.) What is the name of this letter? And this one? (Move them within a couple of inches of each other.) And this one? And this? (Move them within 1. If an inch of each other.) Now what is this letter? And this? (Put them close together.) What is the whole word? What is this letter? And this one? And the word? Then as you point to each letter and move the pointer quickly underneath the word, let them spell in the good old-fashioned way, *o-x. ox; o-x, ox*, &c. When the pupils have mastered these three facts—I., that the word *ox* is the name of the animal in the picture; II., that that word consists of two parts; and III., that the names of those parts are *o* and *x*,—let them go to their seats and print the word upon their slates.

Letters learned:—*o* and *x*.

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## LESSON II.

### go ox

Put in four sections, two at each end, the small ones inside. Print the word *go* on the first two and the word *ox* on the other two. Point to the second word and ask them what it is. Point to the first word and pronounce it. Drill on each word and on the reading of the sentence. Separate the words into their parts by moving the small sections an inch away from the large ones. Point to each letter of the second word and ask its name. Do the same with *o* in the first word. Then point to *g* and tell them its name. Drill on it. Move the parts together again and let them read the sentence. Drill on the spelling, *g-o, go; o-x. ox*. Now take out the first small

piece. Point to *ox*, and let them name it. Then move the small piece to the other end and let them name the word formed. Move it back again and let them pronounce the word and spell it. Drill on the pronunciation and spelling of each word in this way until satisfied that they remember what they learned in the first lesson, and that they are well acquainted with the new character *g*. Then let them go and print the lesson on their slates.

New letter:—*g*.

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### LESSON III.

go on ox

O go on

Use the four sections, a large one at each end and the two small ones together in the middle. Print the word *go* on the first large section, the word *on* on the two small ones, and the word *ox* on the other large one. Let the class name the first word and also the third. Point to the second word and pronounce it. Drill on each word and on the sentence. Review the spelling of *go* and *ox*; then separate *on* into its parts. Ask them the first letter. Tell them the next. Put the parts together and drill on the spelling of each word, giving special attention to the new word *on*. They do not need to have *go* and *ox* analyzed, as they are already acquainted with their composition. When the first sentence is mastered print the second one on the ordinary blackboard just below the apparatus. As they are familiar with the words they can read and spell them without difficulty. Let them read the whole lesson. Point to the words promiscuously and let them name them. Give them

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nd let them  
gain and let  
Drill on the  
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the pointer and let them point to the words as you name them. Drill on the spelling of *ox, on; ox, go; go, ox; go, on*. This will lead them to compare the words and see wherein they agree and wherein they differ. Take out one small section and clean off the two large ones. Print *g* on the first large one and *x* on the other. Move *o* close to *g*, and let them name the word formed. Then move *o* close to *x*, &c. Move *o* away and put *n* in the place of *x*. Move *o* back again, &c. After the lesson let them print one or both sentences on their slates.

New letters:—*n, o.*

#### LESSON IV.

##### I go on an ox

Use the four sections as in Lesson II. Print the word *an* on the first two and the word *ox* on the other two. Or else use them as in Lesson III., printing *on* and *ox* on the large sections and *an* on the small ones. Print the other words to the left of the apparatus. Proceed as usual. They must be told the new words *I* and *an*, and the new letter *a*.

Spelling drill:—*on, an, an: on, ox; ox, go, on.*

New letters:—*I, a.*

#### LESSON V.

Is it an ox?

It is an ox.

So it is an ox.

Use the four sections as in Lesson II. Print *Is* on the first two and *it* on the other two. Print *an ox* to the right of the apparatus. When the first sen-

tence is mastered, print the second one below it; then the third. Let them read the whole lesson simultaneously and individually, taking care that they raise the voice on the last word of the first line and emphasize *is* in the second line.

Spelling drill:—*is, it; So, ox.*

These spelling drills are intended to lead the pupil to compare words which have one or more letters common to each of them. All the words of the lesson should be spelled before this drill is given. There should be no spelling *from memory* until Lesson XIV. is mastered. Whenever a class is brought up more than once for the same lesson, they should print a different sentence each time.

New letters:—*s, i, t, S.*

#### LESSON VI.

Is it a cat?  
It is a cat.  
It can go in a hat.  
So can a rat.  
It is so fat.

The picture for this lesson contains a cat, and a rat going into a hat.

Use three sections. Hang up the picture and have a preliminary conversation on it. Print the word *cat* on the sections, and the words *Is it a* to the left, leaving a space between them and the apparatus sufficient to print the word *cat* twice. After the usual reading, separate *cat* into its parts, as in Fig. 3. When this sentence is mastered rub *cat* off the apparatus and print it in its place on the ordinary

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blackboard. Print the second sentence underneath it, and the words *It can go in a* underneath that again. Print *hat* on the apparatus and lower it until it comes in line with the rest of the sentence. Teach as before. Rub off *hat* and print it in its place; lower the apparatus and print *rat* on it with the rest of the sentence preceding it. Afterwards do the same with *fat*. Review the reading and spelling of the whole. Point to the words in various orders, so as to form new sentences, as, *is It a fat cat, can a rat go in a hat, It is a hat, &c.* Be careful to teach the proper expression.

Spelling drill:—cat, hat, rat, fat; can, cat; so, go; is, in, it.

These words should sometimes be printed on the blackboard in columns, and sometimes the following better plan should be pursued:—Print a word such as *cat* on the apparatus. After the children have pronounced it, move the first section away from the others and ask the name of the letter thereon. Rub it out and put *r* in its place. When the pupils have told the name of it, move the section back and let them pronounce the word thus formed. Take away the first section again, substitute *h* for *r*, and proceed as before. Do the same with *f*. With the next two words of course the last section is moved away. The words of two letters may be similarly treated with two sections. It is recommended that these exercises be given only after the *whole* lesson has been well learned in other respects, and that the words be selected only from the lists given for that or some preceding lesson.

New letters:—c, h, r, f.

## LESSON VII.

I can sit on a log.  
 So can Sam.  
 Sam hit his leg.  
 I am so sick.  
 Sam has no hat.

The picture for this lesson contains two boys sitting on a log.

Proceed with the first three sentences as in the last lesson, printing *log*, *Sam*, and *leg* successively on the apparatus. In the fourth sentence the four sections have to be used for the word *sick*. (See Fig. 4.) As the words in the last sentence contain no new letters, they are all printed on the ordinary black-board.

Spelling drill:—sit, hit; sit, sick; his, hit; hit, hat; log, leg; has, hat; has, his; on, no; an, on; am, Sam; no, so.

New letters:—l, m, e, k.

## LESSON VIII.

I am on my nag.  
 It can run.  
 I must not vex it.  
 Its neck is wet.  
 We can go fast.

The picture for this lesson contains a boy on a horse. Use the four sections for the first sentence, printing *my* on the first two and *nag* on the other two. Or else use two sections for *my* and print *nag* after it on the ordinary board. In the third sentence

four sections may be used, three for *vex* and one for *it*. Or else use three sections for *vex*, and print *it* on the ordinary board. The words to be analyzed are *my*, *run*, *vex*, and *wet*.

Spelling drill:—*my*, *must*; *nag*, *not*, *neck*; *must*, *run*; *vex*, *wet*, *neck*; *is*, *it*, *its*.

New letters:—*y*, *u*, *v*, *w*, *W*.

#### LESSON IX.

Sam sits on the pump.  
Can he quit it?  
Sam can quit the pump.  
I can jump.  
So can Jack.  
Jump, Jack! Jump, quick.

The picture for this lesson contains three boys: one sitting on a pump; another standing on the ground; and the third standing on a box.

The words requiring analysis are *pump*, *quit*, *jump*, and *Jack*.

Spelling drill:—*pump*, *jump*; *quit*, *quick*; *he*, *the*; *So*, *Sam*, *sits*; *it*, *sits*, *quit*, *quick*; *Sam*, *can*, *Jack*.

New letters:—*p*, *C*, *q*, *j*, *J*.

#### LESSON X.

We can get the dog.  
She can run and bark.  
Jack must not kick Boz.  
Boz is a big dog.  
Bob can sit on her back.  
Vick is her pup.

The picture for this lesson contains a big dog and a little one, a boy on the big dog's back, another behind her, and two girls in front of her.

In the preliminary conversation tell them the names of the dog and her pup. It would also be as well, in all the lessons, to tell them the names of all the persons in the picture (when they are given) before commencing the reading.

Words to be analyzed:—*dog, bark, Boz.*

Spelling drill:—We, the, She; bark, back, big, Boz, Bob; kick, Vick; back, Jack; on, not, dog; can, and; pup, must, run.

New letters:—d, b, B, z, V.

#### LESSON XI.

A bird is on the tub.

Has it a nest?

Yes; but we must not get it.

Go and get my cap.

Kick that big hat.

Let Jack kick it.

The picture for this lesson contains a bird on a tub; its nest in a tree; three boys in a group; and a cap and a hat on the ground.

In this lesson, and also in the two following ones, the apparatus is at the beginning of the lines instead of at the end. Print the whole of the first line on the ordinary blackboard just to the right of the apparatus. When that is learned, print *Has* on the apparatus, lower it, and then print the rest of the line to the right, leaving sufficient space between to print *Has* when it is needed. When this sentence is learned,

big dog and  
another be-  
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back, big,  
; on, not,

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put *Has* in its place; print *Yes* on the apparatus; lower it, and then print the rest of the line at the proper distance to the right. *Go*, *Kick*, and *Let* are treated in the same way.

Spelling drill:—bird, big; tub, but, must; hat, that; Has, hat; get, Let; Yes, nest, must; cap, Jack; Kick, Jack.

New letters:—A, H, Y, G, K, L.

#### LESSON XII.

My box is a zinc box.  
Zinc is hard.  
Did Bob mark X on the box?  
No; Bob did not mark it.  
Vick is on my box.  
Quit the box, Vick.

The picture for this lesson contains a box with X marked on the front of it, and a pup standing on the top of it; two girls on one side and a boy on the other.

Print the lesson in somewhat smaller letters than usual. The first word of each line except the fifth is printed on the apparatus.

Spelling drill:—my, mark; on, No; hard, mark; Bob, box; Zinc, Did, Vick, 'Quit.'

New letters:—M, Z, D, X, N, Q.

#### LESSON XIII.

This is a fish in a dish.  
Fish can swim.  
Up jumps the fish.

Pick it up by its fins.  
 Ed Sims can not pick it up.  
 Run and get Dick.

The picture for this lesson contains a fish in a dish on a table; two boys behind the table, and a girl at one end.

Print this lesson in smaller letters than the last. The first word of each line is to be analyzed on the apparatus.

Spelling drill:—is, This, fish, dish; pick, Dick; fins, Sims, swim; and, can; Ed, get; Up, Run, jumps.

New letters:—T, F, U, P, E, R.

#### LESSON XIV.

Let Fred Parks get in the cart.  
 Has Ed Sims got in? No.  
 Go and get Bob Marks,  
 Run, Dick; O be quick!  
 Up jumps Vick. Quit the cart, Vick!  
 I must not vex the man.  
 A fly went in my hand.  
 Tom West has his zinc box.  
 Can Jack Kent mark X on it? Yes.  
 Zinc is hard and so is tin.

The picture for this lesson contains a horse and cart; a man and four boys in the cart, one of whom carries a box; and three boys on the ground.

This lesson is a review. It contains all the small and all the capital letters. As these have all been learned in the previous lessons, the words do not

need to be analyzed on the apparatus. Print the letters smaller than in the last lesson. This will prepare the way for the smaller print of the reading books. The whole lesson may be printed on the ordinary blackboard and the class exercised in the reading and spelling. If the previous lessons have been thoroughly learned they will have little trouble with this one.

Spelling drill:—Let, get; Ed, Fred; Quit, quick; went, Kent; not, got; O, so, Go, No; mark, Marks, Parks, cart, hard; and, hand; has, his; in, tin; is, his; Dick, Vick; be, the; my, fly; Tom, Bob, box; Up, Run, jumps, must; went, West; Yes, West, must; box, vex; man, Can.

When this lesson has been mastered, spelling from memory should be introduced in the following manner:—Point to an easy word, such as *so*, and tell the pupils to spell it. When they have done so, rub it out and ask them to spell it again. Proceed in this way until the whole lesson is rubbed out. Vary the exercise by getting each pupil to point out words, &c.

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#### LESSON XV.

a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m,  
A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M,

n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z.  
N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z.

This lesson is also a review. Print both alphabets on the ordinary board so that each small letter shall be above its corresponding capital. Point to any small letter and then to the capital beneath it, or to

any capital and then to the small letter above it. Teach the pupil to say *a*, capital *A*; capital *G*, *g*, &c. Also, let them point out any letter asked for. When they can do this with ease, teach them to repeat the alphabet in the conventional order, *a, b, c, d, e, &c.*

If in any of these lessons the pupils are slow to perceive the differences between letters which look somewhat alike, show them the differences in the following way:—Put in the four sections of the apparatus; two at each end. Print *b* on the first two so that the perpendicular shall be close to the edge of the large section, and the oval close to the edge of the small one. Print *d* in a similar manner on the other two, and then separate the sections. The pupils may then be easily shown that in *b* the “round part” is *after* the “long stroke,” and in *d* it is *before* it. In the same way *p* can be “differentiated” from *q*, *h* from *n*, *v* from *w*, *n* from *m*, *B* from *P*, *E* from *F*, &c.

In order to impress the necessity of teaching each lesson of the course thoroughly, we quote the following words from an old teacher:—“When a learner is at first rightly and thoroughly grounded, the rest of the work goes on with readiness, with ease, with rapidity, and with assurance. When he is ill-grounded, all falls out contrariwise; much labor and much patience of the master, and much diligence and industry of the scholar, will hardly be able to rescue him from the mischievous consequences of previous ill-grounding. So powerful is all habit when it hath once got hold, and so difficult to eradicate, that it is much harder to unteach the wrong than to teach the right.”

As soon as the pupils get through the course satisfactorily they should be set to read in any primer

that may be authorized for use in the public schools of the Province. Although the author has examined a number of primers he has not seen one which the pupils could not get along with after going through the preceding course of lessons. However, if the teacher has the choice of a primer for his class, we recommend him to choose the one which has, I., the most interesting (to children) lessons; II., the most regular spelling; III., the largest type; and IV., the most attractive illustrations.

In all reading lessons the pupils should be expected to be familiar with the spelling of every word. From his own experience in teaching, and from observation of the teaching of many others, the author is firmly persuaded that no pupil can read well unless he knows the spelling of the words he reads. When pupils *seem to read* fluently in lessons which they cannot spell well, it will be found on examination that they are repeating the lessons from memory. Although Currie says "The object of learning spelling is to be able to write words correctly," we maintain that that is only its secondary object. Its primary object is *to be able to read them*. In reading, the pupil associates sounds with forms; in spelling, he associates forms with sounds: so that spelling is simply the reverse of reading. Hence it is a ready test of the pupil's ability to recognize words, and as such it should be applied to every reading lesson. In assigning a lesson, consider the ability of the class, and give only just as much as the *average* pupil may reasonably be expected to learn. If a majority do not get up the lesson give them the same over again, either for the next day or else for some time during

the same day. If they seem unequal to the task, either give them a shorter lesson or turn them back to an easier one.

In ungraded schools, two *thorough* reading lessons a day for the little ones is generally all that time can be found for. In the afternoon the lesson for the next day should be well read. The new words in the lesson should be spelled simultaneously by the class *from their books*. In the morning the lesson which had been assigned the previous day should be read, and the pupils required to spell the words from memory, either orally or by dictation. Of course, when the pupils are somewhat advanced, it may be taken for granted that they can spell the easy words of the lesson, and therefore these should not be given, except in phrases. But if the teacher does not feel quite sure that a pupil can spell a certain word, it is better to test the matter. Unless the class is very large, or the time is very short, the teacher should not be satisfied with hearing each pupil read once only. They should read two or three times if it can be done without prolonging the lesson too much. An ex-teacher once told me that she always used to give her first class four lessons a day, and that as mine generally read three times over at each lesson, she would call that *six* lessons a day! What would we say to a man who should say to us, "I had six dinners to-day. I took a mouthful of food at 11 o'clock, another at 11:30, another at 12, another at 12:30, another at 1, and another at 1:30"? I think we would be likely to tell him that he would never get fat on such dinners. Two lessons well drilled upon are better than a score skimmed over. If the teacher

wishes to please ignorant parents, let him give four or six short lessons a day, and they will think he is "the right man in the right place;" but if he wishes to please wise ones, and to have his pupils make *real* progress, let him give only as many as can be thoroughly given; then he will not lose half the time in assembling and dismissing classes.

#### *ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF THE RATIONAL METHOD.*

I. It is in harmony with the first principle of education which we have quoted, as it first separates words into their component letters and afterwards puts the letters together again to form words.

II. It is in harmony with the second principle, as it begins with pictures of familiar objects, proceeds to their names, and then to the letters which compose the names.

III. It is in harmony with the third principle. In the first lesson only one word of two letters is taught. In the second lesson only one new letter is introduced. The greatest number introduced in one lesson is six capitals, as in Lessons XI., XII., and XIII.; and some of these differ but slightly from the corresponding small letters previously learned. It must also be remembered that the lessons are taught sentence by sentence. The sentences are short, and there are not more than six in any lesson except Lesson XIV., which is a review.

IV. It is in harmony with the fourth principle. The word *ox* is the easiest word of two letters in the English language, and this is chiefly because it is made up of the two letters which are most readily learned. Every one who has taught the first lesson

(of which Lesson V. is the first part) in the authorized First Book, Part I., must have noticed this. *O*, *I*, and *a* are simpler in form, but they do not convey a complete idea to the child's mind when standing alone. And throughout the course, as far as consistent with other principles, the easiest words have been presented, the easiest letters introduced first, and the hardest kept until near the last.

V. It is in harmony with the fifth principle. Every letter learned is applied immediately in spelling, as no letters are taught except those contained in the words of the lesson.

VI. It has all the principal advantages of the Alphabetic Method without its principal defects. It teaches all the letters with their names, but not apart from words, nor in the conventional order. It also teaches spelling, but does not begin synthetically.

VII. It has the principal advantage of the Phonic Method without its principal defects. It teaches the powers of the letters in the only practicable manner in which children can learn them, *i.e.*, by using them as in the exercises for phonic comparison (see Lesson VI.); but it does not teach those horrid grunts and sneezes which, under some strange hallucination, some have supposed to represent the powers of the letters.

VIII. It has the chief advantage of the Phonetic Method without its leading defects, as it postpones the difficulties of English orthography, not by inventing new letters, but by introducing, as far as possible, only those words whose spelling is regular, leaving the hard words until the child is better able to grapple with them. By this plan the pupils have not to unlearn anything that is taught.

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IX. It has the principal advantages of the Look-and-Say Method without its principal defects, as it gives words before teaching their spelling, but instead of leaving the pupil to his own undeveloped powers of comparison, it compels him to exercise his faculties in distinguishing words according to their composition. It postpones spelling from memory until the end of the course, and teaches letters only as they are used in the lessons.

X. It dispenses with cards or tablets. As the pupils can read readily from a primer when they have completed this blackboard course, there is no need whatever for tablet lessons. This diminishes the number of classes, and thereby allows the teacher to give more time and attention to each pupil. The cost of these tablets would pay no small part of the price of a sectional blackboard.

XI. Children take pleasure in learning and teachers take pleasure in teaching by this method. Let practical teachers tell their experience with other methods, and I think they will all agree that teaching the elements of reading has been to them the most provoking of all school exercises. Never did they pray more fervently for the patience of Job than when their first class was before them. But while the teacher may recall his own sufferings, who can describe the tortures endured by the pupils? As they grow up they forget the agonies of their first lessons in reading, and so they cannot tell us of the pangs they felt; but we may get a partial idea of them by observing the effects of the lessons. Look at the young children as they come to school for the first time. Their faces are beaming with intelligence and

2. **Alimentary Canal** The alimentary canal consists of the mouth, pharynx, oesophagus, crop, gizzard, proventriculus, intestine, rectum, cloaca, and泄殖腔 (recto-cloacal duct).

nd pictures of what the author has seen in various parts of America; and does it not prove that the teacher instead of rearing "the tender shoot" and teaching "the young idea how to shoot," has fet "the tender shoot" in opium and dug up "the young idea" by the root? As we contemplate this "daughter of the innocents," veil may we ask with Prof. Meeklejohn, "How shall we induce our young children to take kindly to the learning—in that it may be welcome and a pleasure and not painful and a labour?" The answer to this question is—use the Rational Method. I had one pupil who had gone through the changes described above, having been more than a year at school. At last he was put to reading in the authorized First Book. But L. not being unable to keep up with his classmates, he had to be turned back. I had two pupils whom I had been teaching on the principles of the Rational Method, but without pictures or the apparatus. One of them had been in school about three days and the other about five. When the first boy was put to read with them he did not know as much as they did. Afterwards they were absent for some time and I taught him alone. Soon the clouds which rested upon us here began to disperse before the beams of the sun of knowledge, and he became the bright, happy, intelligent little fellow that he had been more than a year before. In about five weeks he had been over a course of lessons similar to that given in this book, not got so easy. He was then put back into the reading book and began to catch up to his former classmates. I never had more pleasure in teaching my subject than I had in this case and the one given in the next argument.

XII. And la but by no means least, the pupils make rapid progress under this system. In the article from the *Canada Educational Monthly* referred to under the Phonic Method it is remarked: "By the adoption of this method the time spent in learning to read common words in simple sentences may be reckoned by months instead of years." That is, learning to read in the German language, whose spelling is regular. It must also be borne in mind that the teaching does not begin until the children are "six years of age." But we may say that by the adoption of the Rational Method the time spent in learning to read common words in simple sentences may be reckoned by weeks instead of months or years. And this is in the much more difficult English language, and with children only five years of age. The average time required for the course is probably four weeks, when only two lessons a day are given. In graded schools, where three or four lessons a day are given, the time ought not to be more than three weeks. After finishing the course referred to in the previous argument, I had a class of three, whom I taught with the apparatus. I gave them another course, an improvement on the last, but not so good as the course given in this book. I had only the first picture for the lessons, so I drew the others upon the ordinary blackboard. In *nineteen days* (two lessons a day) they had completed the course, and when set to read in the primers, they began to catch up to the pupil who had been taught without pictures or the apparatus, in a course not so good. Not only did they rapidly master the elements, but they did so without losing any of their natural buoyancy of spirit.

Nay, more, they increased in vivacity as well as intelligence. They came up to their class with sparkling eyes and smiling faces, and went back with them too. Never have I seen pupils more enthusiastic in learning anything than they were in learning the first steps in reading. After mature deliberation I have concluded that I can teach fully *ten times faster* by this method (with the apparatus) than by any other.

#### OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

None of the objections here given, except IV. and IX., have been actually urged against the Rational Method as yet. Most of them have been directed against the Alphabetic Method, but as we have adopted some of the principles of that method in a modified form, we think it necessary to defend them. We have also anticipated other objections. Prof. Meiklejohn says "There are three unanswerable arguments against the teaching of the alphabet," and as "*unanswerable arguments*" are the hardest we ever expect to meet with, we will take them up before any others.

I. "In 'learning' the alphabet the child merely attaches meaningless sounds to meaningless symbols." Against the teaching of the alphabet in the manner described under the Alphabetic and Look-and-Say Methods we allow to this objection its full force. (See Alphabetic Method, 2, 3, and 5, and Look-and-Say Method, 2.) But in defence of the Rational Method of teaching it, we say that if *a*, *I*, and *O*, when used as words, have no meaning, then neither has any other word a meaning, consequently all speech is meaningless, "which is absurd." Therefore *a*, *I*, and *O* have meanings, and their names must be taught. But with regard to the other letters, are

they really meaningless? If the word *cat* has a meaning, will it be right to assert that that meaning is represented by three *meaningless* characters? Would we not have to forget the old proverb, "Out of nothing nothing comes," before we could make such a statement? We must admit that when standing alone the majority of the letters convey no *complete* idea to the mind (except in algebra, initials, &c.), but we cannot on that account stigmatize them as meaningless. As well might we say that the bricks of which a house is to be built, or the boards of which a fence is to be made, are meaningless. But if the characters themselves cannot be called meaningless, still less can their sounds be so called. For if the names of letters are meaningless, then all names are meaningless. Has not the watchmaker a name for every part of a watch? Has not the sailor a name for every part of a ship? Why then should not the pupil have a name for every part of a word? Who has not felt the awkwardness of talking about a thing of which he did not know the name? And how difficult must it be for the little child, whose descriptive powers are so limited! Let those who do not sympathize with it try to speak about some object whose name they do not know, in a language of which they know but little, and they will appreciate names more than they now do. But the Professor himself admits that "When the different letters and the difference of the letters" are "thrown up into consciousness," "the child will demand the names of the letters, because he will feel the need of them when he is obliged to talk about them." Finally, "*meaningless symbols*" is a contradiction of terms, if Worcester-

ter's Unabridged Dictionary is any authority on the meaning of both words.

II. "He gives historical names to symbols which are no guide to their functions or powers. *Aitch*, *doubleyou*, and *gee* (in all purely English words) are the best examples of this."

This statement is untrue. The name of the symbol *o* is a complete guide to one of its powers, and a partial guide to the others. The same may be said of *e*, *i*, *a*, and *u*. And the names of all the other letters are partial guides to their powers, inasmuch as each name contains one power of the letter to which it belongs. But if the statement was true, it would still be valueless as an objection, because it rests upon the false assumption that the names of things should always guide us "to their functions or powers." Is the name *cow* any guide to the animal's "functions" of producing milk, &c.? Or does the word *mule* give us any indication of the marvellous "powers" possessed by the animal's hind legs? We have known persons named *Hunter* who never hunted, *Bakers* who never baked, *Fishers* who never fished, &c. It is true that there are a few names, such as *buzz*, *hiss*, &c., which are almost complete guides to that which they represent, but in the vast majority of cases, whatever relation names may have borne to the objects they represent when first given, their relation to them now is imperceptible.

III. "The sum-total of the addition is often smaller than one of the factors in the addition. Thus we say *see+oh+doubleyou=cow*. But the whole word *cow* is much smaller than the one letter *doubleyou*."

The last sentence is true so far as the *names* are

concerned, but if we are not to know the names of the parts of anything unless the name of the object itself is equal to "the sum-total" of the names of all its parts, we shall know very few names indeed. The clockmaker will not know the names *dial-plate*, *weights*, *springs*, *hammer*, *pendulum*, *hands*, *bell*, *case*, *cords*, &c., &c., &c., because the word *clock* is much smaller than any one of the first five words, and exceedingly smaller than "the sum-total" of them all. The engineer will not know the names *boiler*, *piston*, *cylinder*, *connecting-rods*, *eccentrics*, *safety-valve*, *sand-box*, *driving wheels*, *gauges*, *links*, *guide bars*, *reversing lever*, *steam-chests*, *smoke-stack*, *frames*, &c., &c., &c., because the word *locomotive* is far from being equal to the names of all its parts. Indeed it seems to me that we shall know only the names of *God*, *eternity*, *space*, and *universe*, as all other names are the names of parts of the universe, space, eternity, or God; and not one of these four names is equal to the sum of the names of all its parts. When our knowledge of names is reduced to these we can dispense with the alphabet altogether. The truth is, however, that there is no "addition" of the names, as will be shown in the answer to the next objection, which is similar to this.

IV. With regard to spelling in the form *o-x*, *ox*, &c., it has been objected that the sounds *o* and *x* do not make up the sound *ox*.

The best answer we can give to this is, that nobody was ever foolish enough to imagine that they do. People of common sense have always understood *o-x*, *ox*, to be a short way of saying that when the form or letter named *o* is placed just before the form or letter called *x*, the two together represent the sound *ox*. We

say "Potash and grease unite to form soap," but what rational being would think we meant that the sounds "*potash*" and "*grease*" make up the sound "*soap*"? We say (or ought to say) "Three and two is five," but who ever imagines we believe that the sounds "*three*" and "*two*" make up the sound "*five*"? And would not these objectors, in teaching children to add the figures 2, 5, 3, 1, 4, teach them to say 2, 7, 10, 11, 15, instead of 2 and 5 is 7, 7 and 3 is 10, &c.? What would they think if any one should raise the objection that 5 is not 7, 3 is not 10, &c. It thus appears that the objection was aimed at a phantom which flitted before some imagination of decidedly phonic tendencies. "Very much of the argument against the common method has proceeded on the false assumption that the letter-*names* of a word and its sound are set forth in the relation of phonic parts to their whole; and has therefore not touched the merits of the question."—*Currie*. Those who choose may pronounce the word first and then name the letters, as, *ox*, *o-x*; but the author prefers the old method, because in reading the eye recognizes the letters first and then the mind recalls the sound associated with that combination of letters.

V. "It is anything but a help to a child to make him say *tea-atch-oh-you-gee-atch-tea*, thought." "When the child meets with *which* and does not know it, he is still—in some schools—requested to say *doubleyou-atchayeseecatch*. This is considered in the light of an introduction to the knowledge of the simple sound *which*. It is evident that there exists no connection whatever between the two—no bridge by which you can cross from one to the other; and that the list of

names of the letters which the child repeats is to him an abracadabra and an obstacle."—*Meiklejohn*.

While we believe that in the first stages the pronunciation of a word should be given before the spelling is required, we think that after a time the plan referred to above should be followed. We fail to see how repeating the names of the letters in a word can be "an obstacle" to the child. We believe it may be a great "help" to him in two ways:—1. It makes him observe the composition of the word, and he may remember the power of a letter or combination of letters in some similar word. Thus, in observing the letters in the word *which*, he may recall the power of *wh* in such words as *what*, *when*, *why*, &c., and the power of *ch* in such, *much*, *ditch*, &c., and so arrive at the pronunciation of the word by a mental phonic synthesis. 2. If he has met with the word before and studied its spelling, he may recollect the pronunciation by the "*association of ideas*."

VI. "The student learning a foreign language never thinks of specially learning its spelling; he gives himself to the reading of it, knowing that in due time the spelling will come of itself."—*Currie*.

There is a difference between a person acquiring his native language and one who has already acquired it studying another. A *man* who has learned to make one kind of boat may build another of a different pattern without much trouble, but a *child* would find a great deal of trouble in building a boat by himself the first time he saw one. The truth is that in learning one language a *power of spelling* is acquired in time, so that in studying another the spelling is learned almost at first sight. But because a *man with considerable education* learns to spell a foreign language

without apparent effort, it does not follow that a child five or six years of age can learn the spelling of his mother tongue without assistance.

VII. "Experience has shown that the child had better not be troubled with any attempt at oral spelling while in the first part of the First Book."—*Authorized First Book, Part I.*

We would like to know whose experience has shown this, and what system they followed. The author's experience and that of thousands of other teachers shows the very opposite. I have never known a single pupil to make any satisfactory progress unless either the teacher required the spelling of the lesson or else the pupil studied it at home through the influence of parents, brothers, sisters, or some one else. While teaching by the Look-and-Say Method I once had a large class in the Part I. I had followed the advice quoted above, and the result was neither satisfactory to myself nor the inspector. He advised the teaching of spelling, but as the class were nearly through the book, I allowed them to finish it in the way they began. But I had a small class just commencing to read in the primer, and I began with them. The result was very satisfactory to all parties.

VIII. "Oral spelling does not accustom the eye to the form of the word in writing."—*Educational Journal of Virginia.*

No; but it is a good test of whether the eye is accustomed to the form of the word *in reading* or not. And it is the most easily applied, especially when the children cannot write. In the same article it is said "It may be accepted as a rule that a good reader is always a good speller." This proves that there is a vital connection between spelling and reading—that

no one can read well unless he knows the spelling of the words he reads. If the pupil has looked at a word until it has become photographed on his mind he can name the letters composing it from memory as well as from a book. If he cannot spell a word, neither can he recognize it quickly in reading. It is a great mistake to suppose that oral spelling is intended especially to *teach* spelling; its main object is to *test* whether the pupil has learned the spelling *by looking at the words in the book* or not. Dictation is unquestionably the best test, but there are few schools in which sufficient time can be found to apply it to the whole of every reading lesson, and with children who cannot write it is impracticable. Therefore we must either resort to oral spelling or leave the majority of the words untested; and every teacher knows that children are not in the habit of learning lessons that they will not be examined in.

IX. It has been objected that phonics are not taught in this method.

If this means that we do not teach those mysterious and repulsive sounds which some suppose to be the powers of the letters, we cordially agree with the remark, and consider it an argument in favor of the method. (See Phonic Method, 2, 4, and 5; Argument VII., &c.) But if it means that we do not teach *the powers of the letters*, we assert most emphatically that we *do*, and in a more effectual manner than they are taught in the Phonic Method. Let any one who understands little children compare the plan proposed in Lesson VI. with the exercises suggested in the following extracts and declare which is the most suitable: —“To teach them the *powers* and *natures* (the names

they will soon pick up of themselves[ ? !]) of the letters. \* \* \* 1. Let the attention of the young class be called to the power of each letter, by running round the class words containing this letter in strong prominence. Thus, for *b*, let the little ones all say in turn. *bob-bob-bob*, etc.; for *d*, *did-did-did*; for *f*, *fuff-fuff*; for *g*, *gig-gig-gig*; for *h*, *ha-ha-ha*; for *l*, *lull-lull-lull-lull*; for *m*, *mum-mum*; for *n*, *nun-nun*; for *p*, *pop-pop*; for *r*, only the trilling of the tongue; for *s*, *sō-sō-sō*; for *t*, *tit-tat*, etc.; for *w*, *wow-wow*. 2. The second step is to fine and pare these words down to the thinnest sound of the letter, so that it may be in a fit condition for joining with others. Then the class will say only *lē-lē-lē-lē*; *dē-dē-dē-dē*; and so on."—*Meiklejohn*. "To drill on the sound of a letter, direct attention first to its form, and then require the learners to repeat a syllable which will bring out its sound strongly. Thus for *bat* repeat *beb-beb-beb*, then *bē-bē-bē*, and afterwards the sound of *b* uttered once distinctly, and followed immediately by the sound of *at*: for *cat* repeat a syllable like *ca-ca-ca*, *kē-kē-kē*, and afterwards *kē-at*, *cat*; for *hat*, *hah-hah-huh*, then *hah-at*, *hat*; for *ng*, *ing-ing-ing*, then *s-ing*, *sing*; and so on with the other consonant sounds."—*Royal Canadian Primer*. These exercises clearly demonstrate the impracticability of distinctly uttering the sound of a consonant alone, for if it could be easily done where is the use of saying *fuff-fuff-fuff*, *mum-mum*, *wow-wow*, *ca-ca-ca*, &c.? It is far better to dispense with such ridiculous gibberish, and teach the powers of the letters in a rational manner. We are pleased to quote here the opinion of perhaps the greatest advocate of the Phonic Method in Ontario on such exercises as *hat*, *pat*, *sat*,

*rat, mat, &c.* :—“This is a thoroughly practical way of teaching the sounds of the letters, as the pupils learn their use by using them.” And again:—“These exercises \* \* \* enable them to learn the sounds of the letters in the only philosophical way in which anything can be learned; by using them.”—*James L. Hughes, I.P.S.* And this was in reference to printing the words under each other on the blackboard, &c. It will readily be perceived that putting them on the sectional blackboard, as in Lesson VI., is still better than this. But if any have still a lurking sympathy with phonics, the system places no barrier in the way of teaching them. Indeed, the apparatus gives the greatest facilities for doing so, as the word can be visibly analyzed on it while the teacher is attempting a phonic analysis of it.

X. It may be objected that we have not taught the letters in the order we laid down. (See Alphabetic Method, 4.) This is partly true; but we have made no important deviations. We have taught *g*, *n*, and *a* before *i*, *w*, and *t*, but then *g*, *n*, and *a* are not difficult letters, and some children may learn them sooner than they would learn *i*, *w*, or *t*. And as for the capitals, after the pupils have learned to distinguish the small letters, their perceptive powers will be developed sufficiently to enable them to learn the capitals in any order. Still, as a rule, we have taught the easiest letters first and the hardest last. Whenever we have departed from the order laid down, it has been because we could not get a word which, besides containing the next letter, would be suitable to that part of the course.

XI. It may be objected that we have sometimes used more than one power of the same letter.

This is also true, but the inconsistencies are too slight to cause the child much trouble. Throughout the course it will be found that where a vowel stands alone, or at the end of a word, it has the long sound, as *O, I, go, so, be, we, he, &c.*; but where it begins a word, or is between other letters, it has a short sound, as, *an, am, cat, rat, is, in, sit, hit, on, not, dog, Ed, get, wet, neck*. Still we have *a* and *the*, which in conversation usually have the short sound. We are inclined to think, however, that this is only an ellipsis through combination with other letters, like saying *don't* for *do not*. We have also *zinc*, in which *c* has indeed the same sound as it has everywhere else in the course, but then *k* in *mark* has that sound too. A more serious inconsistency is found in *quit, quick*, in which *ui* has the same sound as *wi* in *swim*. For these we present the plea of necessity. We could find no better word than *Zinc* to introduce *Z*, and none better than *quit* to introduce *q*. Other short words which contain either of these letters are not so familiar to the child, or else their orthography, or their introduction, presents greater difficulties. We think it better to have the few slight inconsistencies which critics may discover in the course than to teach an alphabet which the child must afterwards unlearn. They will prepare him for the greater difficulties which he must face in the reading books. We are not alone, however, in this matter. Prof. Meiklejohn says:—"I have made the small but important discovery that \* \* \* there exists a **PERFECT NOTATION**, which is always self-consistent, and in which sound and symbol are always in agreement. This perfect notation represents the twenty-six letters of our alphabet in only one of their functions." And in Primer I. of the English (*alias Canadian*) Readers:—"Only one power

of single letters is used in Part I." We cannot see the propriety of calling this a "*discovery*," since it is only saying what the first agitators for spelling reform said, viz., that some of our orthography is regular and some is not. But the Professor deserves credit for getting up a primer without many of those glaring inconsistencies of spelling to be found in previous primers. Still he is in the same dilemma as ourselves, for in "Part I." we find *cat* and *cage*, *hen* and *he*, *pig* and *like*, *pup* and *used*, *my* and *very*, *ox* and *oh* and *to* and *off* and *one* and *chip-monk*, &c. He says:—"I thought it better to allow a few inconsistencies to creep in, rather than allow the lessons to be dull." I thought it better to allow a few inconsistencies to creep in because I could not help it. The Royal Canadian Primer has caught the contagion also. In it we find *hen* and *she*, *big* and *fire*, *but* and *put*, *my* and *Fanny*, *so* and *to* and *dog*, *cat* and *calls* and *may*, &c. Nor is the Royal Primer exempt, for in the first lesson there are *I* and *in*, *go* and *dog* and *to*. However, we are very glad to see primers from which inconsistencies of spelling are excluded as far as practicable. We have no doubt they will do much to clear the path of the little ones in learning to read.

XII. It may be objected that it will cost something to get the apparatus.

Of course it cannot be sold for nothing; but then what is usually paid for a set of tablet lessons would be a great help towards buying the blackboard, &c. The progress the pupils will make is worth a thousand times the price of the apparatus to the section. If I were teaching in a place where the trustees were too niggardly to furnish the school with it I would rather pay for one every year than endure the torments of teaching by other methods. I may say, however,

that the apparatus ought to last ten years at least. Indeed, the frame might last fifty or a hundred years, as it is made of wrought iron.

In conclusion, we advise all teachers of primary classes to give the system a fair trial. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating," therefore, whether we have given correct theories or not, if this method produces results satisfactory to both teacher and pupil, they will be a sufficient justification of its claim to the title "*rational*." The success achieved by the author surpassed his most sanguine expectations. He was daily astonished at the fluency and expressiveness of the reading, the rapid progress in spelling, and the superabundant vivacity of the pupils.

Urge the trustees to procure the apparatus for your school; but if you cannot prevail upon them to get it at once, try the course without it, as the author did before he had made one. He printed the word *ox* on the board, and down below he printed the letters *o* and *x* at some distance apart. The pupils were taught the letters in this way. The letters were rubbed out and printed nearer to each other until the pupils were able to distinguish them when close together. While much better results may be reached by this plan than by any of the old methods, yet the success will not be more than half as great as when the apparatus is used, because:

I. Young pupils who have previously known nothing of letters think that the letters you have printed down below are something new; but when you use the apparatus they see you take the same word apart that they have been looking at, and thus the fact that the word is composed of two parts is forced upon them.

II. You do not have to put the word down again, as you analyze the same word that you put down.

## 52 OTHER USES OF THE SECTIONAL BLACKBOARD.

Neither do you have to keep rubbing out the letters and putting them down again in order to get the pupils to recognize them when together, as you can move the sections towards each other.

III. You do not have to draw the pictures on the board or else do without them. Many teachers are unable to draw pictures suitable to the lessons, and it is needless for the author to dilate upon the interest pictures awaken in pupils, or the facilities they give the teacher for introducing and explaining the lesson.

Hoping that this little book may be the means of smoothing the path of knowledge to millions of little learners, and considerably lightening the labors of thousands of hard-worked teachers, the author sends it forth upon its mission.

KINGSTON, ONT., August 15th, 1883.

### APPENDIX.

The sectional blackboard may be used for other purposes besides the analysis of words and letters in reading.

I. It may be used in teaching numeration and notation, thus:—Put down a number such as 23416109 upon it. The parts may then be separated so as to show that there are 23 millions, 416 thousands, and 109 units. In a similar way 15 may be shown to consist of 1 ten and 5 units; 248 of 2 hundreds, 4 tens, and 8 units, &c.

II. It may be used to analyze many simple forms in drawing and writing.

On the following pages will be found tables showing the number of small and capital letters in each lesson, and the number of times each occurs in the course. They represent only a small fraction of the pupil's experience, as each letter is drilled upon until it is mastered. The teacher should give the most attention to those letters which occur the least number of times.

TABLE OF SMALL LETTERS.

| Lesson.    | a  | b  | c  | d  | e  | f | g  | h  | i  | j | k  | l   | m  | n  | o  | p | q  | r  | s  | t  | u | v | w  | x | y | z   | Totals |
|------------|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|---|----|-----|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|---|---|----|---|---|-----|--------|
| I. ....    |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |     |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |   |   |     | 2      |
| II. ....   |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |     |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |   |   |     | 4      |
| III. ....  |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |     |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |   |   |     | 10     |
| IV. ....   |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |     |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |   |   |     | 8      |
| V. ....    |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |     |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |   |   |     | 23     |
| VI. ....   |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |     |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |   |   |     | 42     |
| VII. ....  |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |     |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |   |   |     | 47     |
| VIII. .... |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |     |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |   |   |     | 69     |
| IX. ....   |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |     |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |   |   |     | 83     |
| X. ....    |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |     |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |   |   |     | 49     |
| XI. ....   |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |     |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |   |   |     | 69     |
| XII. ....  |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |     |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |   |   |     | 78     |
| XIII. .... |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |     |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |   |   |     | 85     |
| XIV. ....  |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |     |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |   |   |     | 166    |
| XV. ....   |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |     |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |   |   |     | 26     |
| Totals ..  | 76 | 20 | 46 | 19 | 39 | 7 | 21 | 32 | 77 | 4 | 31 | 431 | 66 | 60 | 18 | 5 | 18 | 55 | 77 | 27 | 3 | 5 | 16 | 8 | 5 | 770 |        |



